



## ***The 4-H Youth Development Environment***

4-H is designed to support the positive and successful development of all youth. 4-H volunteer leaders are essential partners in creating a positive environment by focusing on the strengths of youth and providing positive ways for youth to meet their basic needs.

### CARING RELATIONSHIP (BELONGING)

All youth need a caring, supportive relationship in their lives. Volunteer Leaders and club members provide this fellowship by showing interest in, actively listening to, and fostering the gifts of 4-H youth. 4-H clubs provide an opportunity for long-term youth development seldom found in other educational delivery modes. The multiple interactions of parents and adults working with 4-Hers that is found in 4-H clubs is unique to most other youth education

### CONSTRUCTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES (MASTERY)

Youth rely on the joy they receive from interests, hobbies and group participation to balance disappointments in other parts of their lives. 4-H offers opportunities to take on new challenges and learn new skills. 4-H youth develop mastery through the Experiential Learning Process by experiencing, sharing what happened, processing what was important, generalizing the experience to the real world and applying what was learned to other situations.

The presence of self-confidence and positive self-esteem are today considered to be two of the most important indicators of personal wellness and success in an individual. Through the support and encouragement of caring club parents and leaders youth grow taller in their feelings of self-worth. A sense of accomplishment is achieved from finishing a project and participating in a positive evaluation experience.

### LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES (INDEPENDENCE)

Creating opportunities for youth to develop skills and confidence for leadership and self-discipline is a cornerstone of 4-H. 4-H helps young people recognize the connection between independence and responsibility. Independence does mean greater power and influence but it is linked with responsibility for decisions made and actions taken. Today's society is busy, with worthwhile opportunities for youth in greater abundance than ever before. Being involved in a successful 4-H club means that members learn how to set priorities in developing their club program and manage the time they have available for their club wisely.

### SERVICE TO COMMUNITIES (GENEROSITY)

The 4-H Pledge focuses on the importance of larger service and recognizing a responsibility for the welfare of others. 4-H helps youth focus on developing concern for others and taking action to demonstrate that concern. Service forges bonds between youth and the community, and doing something valued by others raises feelings of self-worth and competence.

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For more information, contact National 4-H Headquarters at 202-720-4087 or <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov>